

Message Text

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ACTION PM-03

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FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1947

S E C R E T NAIROBI 8915

LIMDIS

FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, KE, US

SUBJECT: P-3 FLIGHTS

REF: (A) STATE 208383, (B) NAIROBI 8274

1. I CAN FORESEE NO OBJECTION BY GOK TO P-3 FLIGHTS. INSOFAR AS KENYA IS CONCERNED ADVANTAGES SHOULD OUTWEIGH ANY POSSIBLE DISADVANTAGE. P-3 FLIGHTS WOULD, IN MY OPINION, BE A DEFINITE PLUS IN OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS. WHILE GOK OFFICIALS PREFER MINIMAL PUBLICITY RE WHAT WE MIGHT BE DOING MILITARILY FOR OR IN KENYA, THEY HAVE MADE KNOWN TO US VERY CLEARLY THEIR GRATITUDE, APPRECIATION AND HOPE FOR CONTINUED USG SUPPORT OF THE KIND GOK RECEIVED AT PEAK OF RECENT CONFRONTATION WITH UGANDA. KENYATTA -- AND OTHER TOP GOK OFFICIALS -- HAVE REPEATEDLY STRESSED WISH FOR EARLIER DELIVERY OF F-5E/F'S AND AT TIMES VERGED ON OFFICIALLLY SUGGESTING US MILITARY AIRCRAFT BE "LOANED" TO KENYA. I WOULD DEFINITELY RECOMMEND STATE/DOD PROCEED WITH PLANS FOR P-3 FLIGHTS. I HAVE, HOWEVER, COMMENTS BELOW WHICH I WOULD APPRECIATE BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT.

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2. FREQUENCY OF FLIGHTS: IN EMBASSY'S OPINION SIX FLIGHTS PER QUARTER IS TOO OFTEN FOR ROUTINE VISITS. WE RECOMMEND FOUR FLIGHTS PER QUARTER.

3. IDENTIFICATION WITH DIEGO GARCIA: IN VIEW OF MOST RECENT NOISE AT SRI LANKA REGARDING I.O.Z.P., AND KENYAN (NEWS EDITORIAL) REACTION (US HAS BASE AT DIEGO GARCIA; SOVIETS HAVE BERBERA: BOTH SHOULD BE ABANDONED BY SUPERPOWERS), I STRONGLY RECOMMEND LOW-KEY REFERENCE TO FLIGHTS TO KENYA ORIGINATING IN DIEGO GARCIA.

4. DURATION AND LOCATION OF VISIT IN KENYA: OVERNIGHT AS STATED IN PARA ONE REFTEL (A), WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE. LONGER STAY MIGHT WELL LEAD TO A CUSATION BY KENYA'S CRITICS OF US BASE. WE FORESEE NO PROBLEM WITH P-3 VISITS TO EITHER MOMBASA OR NAIROBI. HOWEVER, WE ASSUME PARA THREE, REFTEL (A) MEANT TO IDENTIFY EMBAKASI NOT EASTLEIGH IN NAIROBI. WE WOULD NOT RECOMMEND ASKING GOK FOR FLIGHTS TO (MILITARY AIRPORT) EASTLEIGH.

5. POSSIBLE CRITICISM BY OPPONENTS OF GOK REGIME (REFTEL (A), PARA TWO): SUPPORT, INCLUDING SALE OF F-5S, US HAS PROVIDED TO KENYA HAS NOT REPEAT NOT RECEIVED ANY CRITICISM BY THE KENYAN PEOPLE. US VISIBILITY HAS ALREADY BEEN RAISED IN KENYA. P-3 FLIGHTS HAVE ALREADY BEEN MADE TO KENYA, WITH POPULAR APPROVAL. THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT SOME OF KENYA'S NEIGHBORS (UGANDA, SOMALIA, AND TANZANIA) WILL NOTE AND CRITICIZE KENYA FOR ASSOCIATING ITSELF WITH BIG POWER AMERICA. HOWEVER, IF FLIGHTS RECEIVE MINIMAL PUBLICITY, I DO NOT THINK THIS CRITICISM WILL BE OF SUFFICIENT IMPORTANCE TO BE DETRIMENTAL TO US INTERESTS IN EAST AFRIA; IN FACT, MEDIUM AND LONG TERM, IT CAN ONLY PROVE TO OUR ADVANTAGE AND TO KENYA'S ADVANTAGE IN EFFORTS TO ATTAIN HOPED-FOR STABILITY IN REGION.

6. I HERE REITERATE MY PESSIMISM EXPRESSED IN PREVIOUS CABLES REGARDING UGANDA. SITUATION HAS ABATED NOT "EASED." BASIC PROBLEMS STILL EXIST. FURTHERMORE,
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WE ARE AWARE OF AMIN'S INTENTIONS REGARDING KENYA, INCLUDING SOME SPECIFICS. GOK IS AS ANXIOUS AS EVER TO CONTINUE TO RECEIVE OUR SUPPORT.

7. I HAVE ALREADY STATED MY VIEWS REGARDING P-3 FLIGHTS TO SEYCHELLES IN REFTEL (B).

8. PAYMENT OF P-3 VISIT BILLS: THE AD HOC BILLING

ARRANGEMENTS AND OLUMINOUS CABLE CORRESPONDENCE ON SAME ATTENDING RECENT P-3 VISITS HAS CARRIED UNNECESSARY DELAYS AND COMPLICATIONS REGARDING PAYMENT. EMBASSY BELIEVES IT ESSENTIAL THAT FOR FUTURE VISITS NAVY PROVIDE FUNDING DATA AUTHORIZING EMBASSY TO PAY, PARTICULARLY SINCE NAVIGATION AND GROUND TRANSPORTATION CHARGES ARE PAYABLE IN KENYA SHILLINGS.

9. I WOULD APPRECIATE STATE/DOD CONSIDERATION OF FEASIBILITY OF PROVIDING SOME "TAKE" OF P-3 MISSIONS TO KENYANS, PARTICULARLY INsofar AS SOMALIA IS CONCERNED. KENYANS HAVE ALREADY ASKED WHETHER DAO, IF ESTABLISHED, COULD PROVIDE INTELLIGENCE TO GOK. QUESTION MIGHT WELL ARISE REGARDING P-3, AND I WOULD LIKE TO BE PREPARED WITH REPLY.

10. IN SUM, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT FOREGOING COMMENTS, I FAVOR P-3 FLIGHTS TO KENYA. APPROVAL WOULD HAVE TO BE GIVEN BY PRESIDENT KENYATTA.
MARSHALL

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